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Readings Booklet

June 1993



English 30

Part B: Reading

Grade 12 Diploma Examination

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June 1993
English 30 Part B: Reading
Readings Booklet
Grade 12 Diploma Examination

Description

Part B: Reading contributes 50% of the total English 30 Diploma Examination mark.

There are 7 reading selections in the Readings Booklet and 70 questions in the Questions Booklet.

Total time allotted: 2 hours

Instructions

- Be sure you have an English 30 Readings Booklet **and** an English 30 Questions Booklet.
- You may **not** use a dictionary, thesaurus, or other reference materials.



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I. Questions 1 to 9 in your Questions Booklet are based on this excerpt from the essay “Travels Back,” published in 1973.

from TRAVELS BACK

Three hours past midnight, Highway 17 between Ottawa and North Bay, November, I’m looking out the Greyhound bus window at the almost nothing I can see. Coffee taste still with me from the Ottawa station, where I was marooned four hours because someone in Toronto mixed up the schedules; I sat writing
5 letters and trying not to watch as the two waitresses disposed of a tiny wizened drunk. “I been all over the world, girlie,” he told them as they forced his coat on him, “I been places you never seen.”

The headlights pick out asphalt, snow-salted road borders, dark trees as we lean round the frequent bends. What I picture is that we’ll pass the motel, which
10 they said was on the highway outside Renfrew—but *which* side?—and I’ll have to walk, a mile maybe, carrying the two suitcases full of my own books I’m lugging around because there may not be any bookstores, who in Toronto knows? A passing truck, Canadian Content squashed all over the road, later the police wondering what I was doing there anyway, as I am myself at this moment.
15 Tomorrow at nine (nine!) I’m supposed to be giving a poetry reading in the Renfrew high school. Have fun in Renfrew, my friends in Toronto said with, I guess, irony before I left.

I’m thinking of summer, a swimming pool in France, an acquaintance of mine floating on his back and explaining why bank managers in Canada shouldn’t be
20 allowed to hang Group of Seven¹ pictures on their walls—it’s a false image, all nature, no people—while a clutch of assorted Europeans and Americans listen incredulously.

“I mean, *Canada*,” one of them draws. “I think they should give it to the United States, then it would be good. All except Quebec, they should give that to
25 France. You should come and live here. I mean, you don’t really live *there* any more.”

We get to Renfrew finally and I step off the bus into six inches of early snow. He was wrong, this if anywhere is where I live. Highway 17 was my first
30 highway, I traveled along it six months after I was born, from Ottawa to North Bay and then to Temiskaming, and from there over a one-track dirt road into the bush. After that, twice a year, north when the ice went out, south when the snow came, the time between spent in tents; or in the cabin built by my father on a granite point a mile by water from a Quebec village so remote that the road went in only two years before I was born. The towns I’ve passed and will pass—
35 Arnprior, Renfrew, Pembroke, Chalk River, Mattawa, the old gingerbread mansions² in each of them built on lumber money and the assumption that the

Continued

¹Group of Seven—seven Canadian artists whose paintings predominantly depict the Canadian wilderness

²gingerbread mansions—characterized by ornate architecture

forest would never give out—they were landmarks, way stations. That was 30 years ago though and they've improved the highway, now there are motels. To me nothing but the darkness of the trees is familiar.

40 I didn't spend a full year in school until I was 11. Americans usually find this account of my childhood—woody, isolated, nomadic—less surprising than do Canadians: after all, it's what the glossy magazine ads say Canada is supposed to be like. They're disappointed when they hear I've never lived in an igloo and my father doesn't say "On, huskies!" like Sergeant Preston on the defunct (American) 45 radio program, but other than that they find me plausible enough. It's the Canadians who raise eyebrows. Or rather the Torontonians. It's as though I'm part of their own past they find disreputable or fake or just can't believe ever happened.

I've never read at a high school before. At first I'm terrified, I chew Tums 50 while the teacher introduces me, remembering the kinds of things we used to do to visiting dignitaries when I was in high school: rude whispers, noises, elastic bands and paper clips if we could get away with it. Surely they've never heard of me and won't be interested: we had no Canadian poetry in high school and not much of anything else Canadian. In the first four years we studied the Greeks and 55 Romans and the Ancient Egyptians and the Kings of England, and in the fifth we got Canada in a dull blue book that was mostly about wheat. Once a year a frail old man would turn up and read a poem about a crow; afterward he would sell his own books (as I'm about to do), autographing them in his thin spidery handwriting. That was Canadian poetry. I wonder if I look like him, vulnerable, 60 misplaced and redundant. Isn't the real action—the *real* action—their football game this afternoon?

Question period: Do you have a message? Is your hair really like that, or do you get it done? Where do you get the ideas? How long does it take? What does it *mean*? Does it bother you, reading your poems out loud like that? It would 65 bother me. What is the Canadian identity? Where can I send my poems? To get them published.

They are all questions with answers, some short, some long. What astonishes me is that they ask them at all, that they want to talk: at my high school you didn't ask questions. And they write, some of them. Inconceivable. It wasn't like 70 that, I think, feeling very old, in my day.

Later, 30 poetry readings later. Reading a poem in New York that has an outhouse in it and having to define outhouses (and having the two or three people who have actually used one come up furtively afterwards and say that they, too, once . . .). Meeting a man who has never seen a cow; who has never, in fact, been 75 outside of the city of New York. Talking then about whether there is indeed a difference between Canada and the U.S. (I been places you never seen . . .). Trying to explain, in Detroit, that in Canada for some strange reason it isn't just other poets who come to poetry readings. ("You mean . . . people like *our* mothers read poetry?") Having someone tell me that maybe what accounts for the

Continued

80 “strength” of my work is its fetching “regional” qualities—“you know, like Faulkner . . .”

In London, Ontario, the last poetry reading of the year and perhaps, I’m thinking, for ever, I’m beginning to feel like a phonograph. A lady: “I’ve never felt less like a Canadian since all this nationalism came along.” Another lady,
85 very old, with astonishing sharp eyes: “Do you think in metaphor?” Someone else: “What is the Canadian identity?” That seems to be on people’s minds.

How to keep all this together in your head, my head. Because where I live is where everyone lives: it isn’t just a place or a region, though it is also that (and I could have put in Vancouver and Montreal, where I lived for a year each, and
90 Edmonton where I lived for two, and Lake Superior and Toronto . . .). It’s a space composed of images, experiences, the weather, your own past and your ancestors’, what people say and what they look like and how they react to what you’re doing, important events and trivial ones, the connections among them not always
95 obvious. The images come from outside, they are *there*, they are the things we live with and must deal with. But the judgments and the connections (what does it *mean*?) have to be made inside your head and they are made with words: good, bad, like, dislike, whether to go, whether to stay, whether you live there any more. For me that’s partly what writing is: an exploration of where in reality I live.

I think Canada, more than most countries, is a place you choose to live in.
100 It’s easy for us to leave, and many of us have. There’s the U.S. and England, we’ve been taught more about their history than about our own, we can blend in, become permanent tourists. There’s been a kind of standing invitation here to refuse authenticity to your actual experience, to think life can be meaningful or important only in “real” places like New York or London or Paris. And it’s a
105 temptation: the swimming pool in France is nothing if not detached. The question is always, Why stay? and you have to answer that over and over.

I don’t think Canada is “better” than any other place, any more than I think Canadian literature is “better”; I live in one and read the other for a simple reason: they are mine, with all the sense of territory that implies. Refusing to
110 acknowledge where you come from is an act of amputation: you may become free floating, a citizen of the world (and in what other country is that an ambition?) but only at the cost of arms, legs or heart. By discovering your place you discover yourself.

But there’s another image, fact, coming from the outside that I have to fit in.
115 This territory, this thing I have called “mine,” may not be mine much longer. Part of the much-sought Canadian identity is that few nationals have done a more enthusiastic job of selling their country than have Canadians. Of course there are buyers willing to exploit, as they say, our resources; there always are. It is our eagerness to sell that needs attention. Exploiting resources and developing
120 potential are two different things: one is done from without by money, the other from within, by something I hesitate only for a moment to call love.

Margaret Atwood
Contemporary Canadian poet,
novelist, and journalist

II. Questions 10 to 18 in your Questions Booklet are based on this poem.

THE SILKWORMS¹

All their lives in a box! What generations,
What centuries of masters, not meaning to be cruel
But needing their labour, taught these creatures such patience
That now though sunlight strikes on the eye's dark jewel
5 Or moonlight breathes on the wing they do not stir
But like the ghosts of moths crouch silent there.

Look, it's a child's toy! There is no lid even,
They can climb, they can fly, and all the world's their tree;
But hush, they say in themselves, we are in prison.
10 There is no word to tell them that they are free,
And they are not; ancestral voices bind them
In dream too deep for wind or word to find them.

Even in the young, each like a little dragon
Ramping and green upon his mulberry leaf,
15 So full of life, it seems, the voice has spoken:
They hide where there is food, where they are safe,
And the voice whispers, 'Spin the cocoon,
Sleep, sleep, you shall be wrapped in me soon.'

Now is their hour, when they wake from that long swoon;
20 Their pale curved wings are marked in a pattern of leaves,
Shadowy for trees, white for the dance of the moon;
And when on summer nights the buddleia² gives
Its nectar like lilac wine for insects mating
They drink its fragrance and shiver, impatient with waiting,

Continued

¹silkworms—a species of moth whose larvae spin a silky cocoon in which the moth changes to the chrysalis state until it eventually emerges as an adult insect. The larvae are fed mulberry leaves. The cocoon with chrysalis is harvested for the manufacturing of silk thread.

²buddleia—a flowering shrub

- 25 They stir, they think they will go. Then they remember
It was forbidden, forbidden, ever to go out;
The Hands are on guard outside like claps of thunder,
The ancestral voice says Don't, and they do not.
Still the night calls them to unimaginable bliss
30 But there is terror around them, the vast, the abyss,

And here is the tribe that they know, in their known place,
They are gentle and kind together, they are safe for ever,
And all shall be answered at last when they embrace.
White moth moves closer to moth, lover to lover.

- 35 There is that pang of joy on the edge of dying—
Their soft wings whirr, they dream that they are flying.

Douglas Stewart
Contemporary Australian poet

III. Questions 19 to 30 in your Questions Booklet are based on this excerpt from the play *Not About Heroes*.

from NOT ABOUT HEROES

CHARACTERS:

WILFRED OWEN—twenty-four years old
SIEGFRIED SASSOON—thirty-one years old

The following scene takes place in the Craiglockhart War Hospital for Nervous Disorders in Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1917. WILFRED OWEN is suffering from shell shock after four months in the trenches in France during the First World War. SIEGFRIED SASSOON, also a patient at the hospital, is a well-known, acclaimed poet and a soldier of remarkable courage, who has achieved notoriety by publishing a protest against the “evil and unjust” conduct of war. This is the first meeting between OWEN and SASSOON.

(OWEN timidly knocks. SASSOON does not welcome the intrusion. He quickly takes a golf club and a polishing rag from the golf bag, then moves away. SASSOON speaks sharply and does not look at OWEN when he enters the space which is SASSOON’s hospital room.)

SASSOON: Yes? Come! *(OWEN comes forward.)*

OWEN: Lieutenant Sassoon?

SASSOON: For the moment—yes.

OWEN: Oh . . .

5 **SASSOON:** I *am* Sassoon. Is there something you want?

OWEN: I’ve d-disturbed you. I’m very sorry.

SASSOON: Having disturbed me, could you not at least tell me why?

OWEN: It’s . . . these . . .

SASSOON: What are they?

10 **OWEN:** Copies of your b-book. Your l-latest book, I mean. “The Old Huntsman.” *(SASSOON is surprised, but will not let OWEN see it.)*

SASSOON: Mmm . . . Not wise to go around in public with those under your arm. Unless you *want* to stay in this place until the end of the war.

OWEN: No.

15 **SASSOON:** No?

OWEN: No—I don’t want to stay in this p-place until the end of the war.

SASSOON: Then you’d be safer even with Shelley. And positively impregnable¹ with Rupert Brooke.

OWEN: I really have disturbed you. F-forgive me. Sorry. *(OWEN smiles)*

Continued

¹impregnable—invulnerable, secure

- 20 *apologetically and turns to go.*)
SASSOON: No, stay . . . ! I don't *mean* to be rude.
OWEN: Oh, it's not rude. I understand.
SASSOON: You do?
OWEN: Oh, yes.
- 25 **SASSOON:** It's just that—in this place, you never know who's going to come in next.
OWEN: Or what m-may be wrong with him.
SASSOON: Exactly. (*A truce seems to be established. OWEN ventures further in. SASSOON returns the golf club to the bag and takes out another.*
30 *Returning, he risks a glance at OWEN, who is smiling slyly but reassuringly at him.*) Now, I don't want to pry, but are you going to tell me why you're carrying all those copies of my book about with you? Are you delivering them to the patients? Has it been made recommended reading? If it has, the staff must be madder than the inmates. (*OWEN, enjoying the sense of*
35 *humour, shakes his head in response.*) Then why?
OWEN: I wondered if you might inscribe them for me.
SASSOON: What, all of them?
OWEN: Oh, if it's too much trouble . . .
SASSOON: No, it's not that. You've contributed at least two shillings'² worth of
40 royalties there. But all of them—for you?
OWEN: Oh, no. For friends. And my mother.
SASSOON: I see.
OWEN: And *one* for me.
SASSOON: Good.
- 45 **OWEN:** Then you will?
SASSOON: I'm very flattered. Of course I will.
OWEN: Thank you.
SASSOON: Well, hand them over. (*OWEN does so, then starts searching his pockets.*)
- 50 **OWEN:** I've made a list. (*SASSOON has opened a book and seen "Absolution."*)³
SASSOON: Oh, dear God . . .
OWEN: Sorry . . .?
SASSOON: This thing:
- 55 "War is our scourge, yet war has made us wise
 And fighting for our freedom, we are free . . ."
OWEN: Er . . . "Absolution"?
SASSOON: You know, I think if *I* read this one first, I'd be sick all over it then throw it into the fire.

Continued

²shillings—British coins

³"Absolution"—title of a Sassoon poem; the word means pardon, forgiveness

60 **OWEN:** Well, I did wonder if you really meant it.
SASSOON: Oh, I meant it when I wrote it, God help me. The truth was revealed
a bit more gradually.
OWEN: But you decided to publish it . . . ?
SASSOON: Yes. Bait them with this, and the “Huntsman.” Hook them with the
65 rest.
OWEN: Sorry . . . ?
SASSOON (*Patiently*): It’s called tactics. They’ll never take it in if I just call
them fools. But they might if I admit how much of a fool I was myself.
OWEN: Oh, yes I see. It’s much harder to win the medal than to throw it away.
70 (*SASSOON is surprised—and suspicious of how much OWEN knows.*)
SASSOON (*Demands harshly*): What makes you say that?
OWEN (*His nervousness returning*): It’s just that you have to win the m-medal
first—before you have the right to say anything . . . (*Struggling.*) You have
75 to try to write a poem before you can say “any fool can write poetry.” That’s
all.
SASSOON: Mmm . . .
OWEN: About the next one—“To My Brother” . . . (*SASSOON turns the page
and does not like what he sees.*) When did he—? I hope you won’t mind me
asking—but when was he killed?
80 **SASSOON:** Two years ago. Exactly two years ago. Gallipoli.⁴
OWEN: Oh . . . I suppose that was when most of us began to doubt.
SASSOON: But not me, it would seem . . . It was on that peninsula that Hecuba,⁵
after the fall of Troy, blinded King Polymestor, slaughtered his children, and
was turned into a dog for her pains. Did you know that?
85 **OWEN:** No, I didn’t.
SASSOON: It could have been an omen—if only they’d known. Elementary
Greek should be a compulsory qualification for Ministers of War. (*OWEN is
about to laugh, then wonders if SASSOON means it to be funny.*) And, when
we crept, humiliated, off that sorry place, at the end of the year—in the
90 middle of the night—the bedraggled remnants were packed off for a fresh
chance to be slaughtered on the Somme.⁶ (*Trying to lighten the mood.*) Are
you sending one of these to your Colonel, by any chance? (*But OWEN does
not respond to the attempt. His reflex is a sudden tension, turning his head
away as if ashamed. It is his turn to wonder how much SASSOON knows.*)
95 What is it? . . . I’ve said something tactless. Something that hurt? (*No reply.*)
About your Colonel? . . . Was it your Colonel who had you sent here?
OWEN (*Mumbling*): Yes . . . It . . . it’s not important. (*SASSOON is angry with
himself, but then asks for the list of names with surprising gentleness.*)

Continued

⁴Gallipoli—a peninsula in Turkey located just across from Troy on the Dardanelles Strait; site of a First World War battle where more than 200,000 men died

⁵Hecuba—in the story of *The Iliad*, Hecuba is the wife of King Priam of ancient Troy

⁶Somme—river in France; site of a devastating First World War battle

SASSOON: Let me see, then. (*Takes the list from OWEN.*) Who's this? A
 100 relation?
OWEN: That's . . . S-Susan is my m-m-mother. (*SASSOON starts to write.*)
SASSOON: That's good. But you surprise me. These puny attempts at
 enlightening the civilians—won't they worry her? Perhaps frighten her?
OWEN: You've said n-nothing there that I've not already told her in my letters.
 105 **SASSOON:** Really? You've told her? Was that a good idea, do you think?
OWEN: She wants the truth. She doesn't want me to protect her from it. And I
 certainly couldn't lie to her.
SASSOON: A civilian who wants the truth? Is there such an animal? Even—
 (*He finds "They" in the book.*) this sort of truth?
 110 "The Bishop tells us when the boys come back
 They will not be the same: for they'll have fought
 In a just cause . . .
 We're none of us the same! the boys reply.
 For George lost both his legs; and Bill's stone blind;
 115 Poor Jim's shot through the lungs and like to die;
 And Bert's gone syphilitic: you'll not find
 A chap who's served that hasn't found *some* change.
 And the Bishop said: The ways of God are strange!"
OWEN: That's brilliant. And it's true.
 120 **SASSOON:** Well, it's true. But for your mother?
OWEN: Yes.
SASSOON: You can trust her with knowing all that?
OWEN: *She* must not be taken in by the lies.
SASSOON: I see. And would you risk telling her about yourself? That, in the
 125 end, every one of us can kill and go on killing, if it means saving our own
 lives?
OWEN: If you love someone, that person has to know *all* that you are. The
 worst, the most horrific . . . And the most shameful.
SASSOON: Everything the war calls out of us, in fact.
 130 **OWEN:** You know. Of course you do. Better than anybody, I think. It's your
 poems that will help me to make her understand. Sometime, she will have to
 know who I really am.
SASSOON: But most of the people at home don't want to know—and they don't
 even try to imagine.
 135 **OWEN:** I told you, I wrote to her—even about winter at the Front. Last
 February. You remember? The cold that makes your brain ache with it?
 When you're afraid that your eyes will freeze over? I told her about No
 Man's Land under snow—like the face of the moon, a chaos. I called it a
 place of madness, where nothing lived—not an insect, not a blade of grass.
 140 Only the shadows of the hawks across the sky, when they scent carrion. I
 said that we were the carrion. The "Glorious Dead," lying unburied day

Continued

- after day, until their putrefied bodies explode in our faces. We know that we'll die like that, filthy and terrified. And that *is* how we die. And it's all for lies. Their Justice and Liberation are *lies*. We really die because no one
- 145 *cares* to save us. No one dares to imagine how it really is.
- SASSOON:** We are the only ones who can help them to imagine. If they know the truth, the killing will have to stop!
- OWEN:** Will you . . . Will you teach me the words? (*SASSOON, having got so near, reacts in character by ducking away.*)
- 150 **SASSOON:** Jingles, that's all I can write . . . But until there's something better, let the jingles ring out.
- OWEN:** You know that's not true. Your poems have too much of yourself in them.
- SASSOON** (*Surprised, wary*): I'm not sure I want to know what you mean.
- 155 **OWEN:** Compassion is the most important thing.
- SASSOON:** You can't be serious.
- OWEN:** It's true. I've been trying for three years to . . . Nothing. Well, never mind . . . Would you call your poem "The Death Bed" a "jingle"?
- SASSOON** (*A reluctant concession*): There's always one exception. Sometimes
- 160 two . . . but now, one last book. (*SASSOON takes the book OWEN is holding, and looks at the list.*) Who is this one for?
- OWEN:** For me.
- SASSOON:** Of course. (*About to write, then*) I'm sorry, I don't know your name.
- 165 **OWEN:** Owen. W.E.S. Owen.
- SASSOON** (*Writing*): W.E.S. Owen . . . from . . . Well. There you are. (*SASSOON hands over the pile of books.*)
- OWEN** (*Suddenly formal*): Thank you for doing that. But thank you more for what's in the book.
- 170 **SASSOON:** The pleasure was mine. The . . . astonishment was mine also. (*OWEN starts to go.*) Lieutenant Owen!
- OWEN:** Sir?
- SASSOON:** Who are you?
- OWEN:** . . . Sir?
- 175 **SASSOON:** What are you? What do you do?
- OWEN:** Nothing, now. But I shall be a poet. (*OWEN leaves him.*)

Stephen MacDonald
Modern British playwright

Note: In 1918, just before his death in the First World War, Wilfred Owen wrote the poem *Dulce et Decorum Est*, a powerful expression of the horror of war.

IV. Questions 31 to 38 in your Questions Booklet are based on this poem.

THE IDES OF MARCH¹

Fear grandeurs, O my soul.
And if you cannot triumph over your
ambitions, pursue them with hesitation
and precaution. And the more you go forward,
5 the more searching, attentive you must be.

And when you reach your peak, Caesar² at last;
when you take on the form of a famous man,
then above all take heed as you go out on the street,
a man of authority conspicuous with your followers,
10 if by chance out of the mob some Artemidorus
should approach you, who brings you a letter,
and hastily says, "Read this at once,
it contains grave matters of concern to you,"
do not fail to stop; do not fail to put off
15 all talk or work; do not fail to turn away
the various people who salute you and kneel before you
(you can see them later); let even the Senate
itself wait, and immediately get to know
the grave writings of Artemidorus.

C.P. Cavafy
Modern Greek poet

¹the ides of March—March 15; any fatal or inauspicious day. Artemidorus carried to Julius Caesar a soothsayer's warning that Caesar should beware the ides of March; Julius Ceasar was subsequently assassinated on March 15.

²Caesar—the title attached to the emperor of the Holy Roman Empire; Julius Caesar's family name; any powerful ruler or autocrat

V. Questions 39 to 50 in your Questions Booklet are based on this excerpt from the play *King Richard the Second*.

from **RICHARD THE SECOND**, Act II, scene i

CHARACTERS:

JOHN OF GAUNT—Duke of Lancaster, aged uncle to the King

DUKE OF YORK—Edmond of Langley, uncle to the King

KING—Richard the Second of England

The year is 1397 and England is in a state of disarray. There is quarreling and suspicion among the royal lords. Young KING RICHARD is known for his erratic, hot-headed behavior and has just made the decision to lease the land of England to help pay the costs of putting down rebel factions. JOHN OF GAUNT has fallen ill with grief over the exile of his son and the King's most recent decisions. GAUNT and YORK have asked to see the King.

(Enter JOHN OF GAUNT, sick, with the DUKE OF YORK.)

GAUNT: Will the King come, that I may breathe my last
In wholesome counsel to his unstaid youth?

YORK: Vex not yourself nor strive not with your breath,
For all in vain comes counsel to his ear.

5 **GAUNT:** O, but they say the tongues of dying men
Enforce attention like deep harmony.
Where words are scarce, they are seldom spent in vain,
For they breathe truth that breathe their words in pain.
He that no more must say is listened more
10 Than they whom youth and ease have taught to glose.¹
More are men's ends mark'd than their lives before.
The setting sun, and music at the close,
As the last taste of sweets, is sweetest last,
Writ in remembrance more than things long past.
15 Though Richard my life's counsel would not hear,
My death's sad tale may yet undeaf his ear.

YORK: No; it is stopp'd with other flattering sounds,
As praises, of whose taste the wise² are fond,
Lascivious³ metres, to whose venom sound
20 The open ear of youth doth always listen;

Continued

¹to glose (to gloss)—use pleasant language and talk about agreeable things

²the wise—even the wise (are fond of praise)

³Lascivious—lustful

Report of fashions in proud Italy,
 Whose manners still our tardy apish nation
 Limp after in base imitation.
 Where doth the world thrust forth a vanity
 25 (So it be new, there's no respect how vile)
 That is not quickly buzz'd into his ears?
 Then all too late comes counsel to be heard
 Where will doth mutiny with wit's regard.
 Direct not him whose way himself will choose.
 30 'Tis breath thou lack'st, and that breath wilt thou lose.
GAUNT: Methinks I am a prophet new inspir'd
 And thus, expiring, do foretell of him:
 His rash fierce blaze of riot cannot last,
 For violent fires soon burn out themselves;
 35 Small show'rs last long, but sudden storms are short;
 He tires betimes that spurs too fast betimes;
 With eager feeding food doth choke the feeder;
 Light vanity, insatiate cormorant,⁴
 Consuming means, soon preys upon itself.
 40 This royal throne of kings, this scept' red isle,
 This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,
 This other Eden, demi-paradise,
 This fortress built by Nature for herself
 Against infection and the hand of war,
 45 This happy breed of men, this little world,
 This precious stone set in the silver sea,
 Which serves it in the office of a wall,⁵
 Or as a moat defensive to a house,
 Against the envy of less happier lands;
 50 This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England,
 This nurse, this teeming womb of royal kings,
 Fear'd by their breed and famous by their birth,
 Renowned for their deeds as far from home
 For Christian service and true chivalry
 55 As is the sepulchre⁶ in stubborn Jewry
 Of the world's ransom, blessed Mary's son;
 This land of such dear souls, this dear dear land,
 Dear for her reputation through the world,
 Is now leas'd out (I die pronouncing it)
 60 Like to a tenement or pelting farm.

Continued

⁴insatiate cormorant—the cormorant is a sea bird whose appetite cannot be satisfied

⁵wall—refers to the “silver sea”[English Channel] that acts as a wall or barricade

⁶sepulchre—tomb

England, bound in with the triumphant sea,
 Whose rocky shore beats back the envious siege
 Of wat'ry Neptune, is now bound in with shame,
 With inky blots and rotten parchment bonds.
 65 That England that was wont to conquer others
 Hath made a shameful conquest of itself.
 Ah, would the scandal vanish with my life,
 How happy then were my ensuing death!
 (Enter KING, QUEEN, lords and servants.)
 70 **YORK:** The King is come. Deal mildly with his youth;
 For young hot colts, being rag'd, do rage the more.
QUEEN: How fares our noble uncle Lancaster?
KING: What comfort, man? How is't with aged Gaunt?
GAUNT: O, how that name befits my composition!
 75 Old Gaunt indeed, and gaunt in being old.
 Within me grief hath kept a tedious fast;
 And who abstains from meat that is not gaunt?
 For sleeping England long time have I watch'd;
 Watching breeds leanness, leanness is all gaunt.
 80 The pleasure that some fathers feed upon
 Is my strict fast—I mean my children's looks—
 And therein fasting has thou made me gaunt.
 Gaunt am I for the grave, gaunt as a grave,
 Whose hollow womb inherits naught but bones.
 85 **KING:** Can sick men play so nicely with their names?
GAUNT: No, misery makes sport to mock itself.
 Since thou dost seek to kill my name in me,⁷
 I mock my name, great King, to flatter thee.
KING: Should dying men flatter with those that live?
 90 **GAUNT:** No, no! men living flatter those that die.
KING: Thou, now a-dying, say'st thou flatterest me.
GAUNT: O, no! thou diest, though I the sicker be.
KING: I am in health, I breathe, and see thee ill.
GAUNT: Now, he that made me knows I see thee ill;
 95 Ill in myself to see, and in thee seeing ill.
 Thy deathbed is no lesser than thy land,
 Wherein thou liest in reputation sick;
 And thou, too careless patient as thou art,
 Committ'st thy anointed body to the cure
 100 Of those physicians that first wounded thee.
 A thousand flatterers sit within thy crown,
 Whose compass is no bigger than thy head;

Continued

⁷to kill my name in me—to make my name die with me since my son (and heir) is banished

And yet, incaged in so small a verge,
The waste is no whit lesser than thy land.
105 O, had thy grandsire, with a prophet's eye,
Seen how his son's son should destroy his sons,
From forth thy reach he would have laid thy shame,
Deposing thee before thou wert possess'd,
Which art possess'd now to depose thyself.
110 Why, cousin, wert thou regent of the world,
It were a shame to let this land by lease;
But, for thy world enjoying but this land,
Is it not more than shame to shame it so?
Landlord of England art thou now, not King.

William Shakespeare

VI. Questions 51 to 61 in your Questions Booklet are based on this excerpt from the novel *Oscar and Lucinda*.

from OSCAR AND LUCINDA

The setting is New South Wales, Australia, 1850. Lucinda Leplastrier is seventeen. She has just been orphaned and is setting out for Sydney on a simple barge that is transporting cauliflowers. She has with her the money from the sale of her mother's farmland.

The river journey was picturesque, with so many pretty farms along its banks. Lucinda could not look at them without feeling angry. She looked straight ahead, shivering. It was cold, of course, but not only cold that caused this agitation. There was a jitteriness, a sort of stage fright about her future which was not totally
5 unpleasant. She dramatized herself. And even while she felt real pain, real grief, real loneliness, she also looked at herself from what she imagined was the captain's perspective, and then she was a heroine at the beginning of an adventure.

She did not know that she was about to see the glassworks¹ and that she would, within the month, have purchased them. And yet she would not have been
10 surprised. This was within the range of her expectations, for whatever harm Elizabeth Leplastrier had done her daughter, she had given her this one substantial gift—that she did not expect anything small from her life.

It would be easy to see this purchase—half her inheritance splurged—on the first thing with a FOR SALE sign tacked to it—as nothing more than the desire to
15 unburden herself of all this money, and this may be partly true. But the opposite is true as well, i.e. she knew she would need the money to have any sort of freedom. It is better to think about the purchase as a piano manoeuvred up a staircase by ten different circumstances and you cannot say it was one or the other that finally got it there—even the weakest may have been indispensable at that tricky turn on the
20 landing. But of all the shifting forces, there is this one burly factor, this strong and handsome beast, i.e. her previous experience of glass via the phenomenon known as *larmes bataviques* or Prince Rupert's drops.

You need not ask me who is Prince Rupert or what is a *batavique* because I do not know. I have, though, right here beside me as I write (I hold it in the palm of
25 my left hand while the right hand moves to and fro across the page) a Prince Rupert's drop—a solid teardrop of glass no more than two inches from head to tail. And do not worry that this oddity, this rarity, was the basis for de la Bastie's technique for toughening glass, or that it led to the invention of safety glass—these are practical matters and shed no light on the incredible attractiveness of the drop
30 itself which you will understand faster if you take a fourteen-pound sledgehammer and try to smash it on a forge. You cannot. This is glass of the most phenomenal

Continued

¹the glassworks—a glass manufacturing plant

strength and would seem, for a moment, to be the fabled unbreakable glass described by the alchemical author of *Mappae Clavicula*. And yet if you put down your hammer and take down your pliers instead—I say “if”; I am not
35 recommending it—you will soon see that this is not the fabled glass stone of the alchemists, but something almost as magical. For although it is strong enough to withstand the sledgehammer, the tail can be nipped with a pair of blunt-nosed pliers. It takes a little effort. And once it is done it is as if you have taken out the keystone, removed the linchpin, kicked out the foundations. The whole thing
40 explodes. And where, a moment before, you had unbreakable glass, now you have grains of glass in every corner of the workshop—in your eyes if you are not careful—and what is left in your hand you can crumble—it feels like sugar—without danger.

It is not unusual to see a glass blower or a gatherer scrabbling around in a
45 kibble, arm deep in the oily water, sorting through the little gobs of cast-off cullet, fossicking for Prince Rupert’s drop. The drops are made by accident, when a tear of molten glass falls a certain distance and is cooled rapidly.

You will find grown men in the glass business, blowers amongst them, who have handled molten metal all their life, and if you put a Prince Rupert’s drop
50 before them, they are like children. I have this one here, in my hands. If you were here beside me in the room, I would find it almost impossible not to demonstrate it to you, to take my pliers and—in a second—destroy it.

So it was a Prince Rupert’s drop, shaped like a tear, but also like a seed, that had a powerful effect on Lucinda Leplastrier. It is the nature of these things. You
55 can catch a passion from them, and the one in question, the first one Lucinda saw—at an age when she had dimples on her knees—was a particularly beautiful specimen, twisted red and milk-white glass from the damp brick island of Murano. It was sent to her father by his great friend John Bell, FRS. And Lucinda, entering Sydney on the barge of cauliflowers, remembered the day it arrived, eight years
60 before, in Parramatta.

The post-office steps were made from wood and there was a great fat swathe of sunshine spilled across them. It was winter and the sunshine was welcome. She could feel it through the cotton of her dress. The packet steamer had just arrived from Sydney. Her papa sat beside her on the step. He had Mr. Bell’s parcel. It
65 was this that took his attention and he could be no more bothered by the complaints of the owners of passing skirts and trousers (sour-smelling wool, velvet with mothballs) than by the demands of all the other mail from Home;² these last he threw into his sugar bag.

His hands were like his body—broad and strong—but they were short-
70 fingered and surprisingly delicate in their movements; they attacked Mr. Bell’s parcel like a pair of pale-bellied spiders. Pick, pick. Red sealing wax shattered. Brown paper was torn in such a way it could never be reused.

Lucinda pressed close against her papa. She liked the rough feel of his jacket

Continued

²Home—to the majority of Australian immigrants, England was “home”

on her cheek, all the hairy smells of bran and tweed and apple skins. She saw the
75 Prince Rupert's drop emerge from its nest of wrinkled paper but mistook it—
ooh!—for a humbug or a sally twist. She reached out her hand, but her father held
it from her.

"No," he said. He did not look at her. He read the letter which accompanied
it.

80 Her father made a noise—a little moan—and jumped to his feet. Lucinda
stood also.

"Stay, Lucinda."

She felt herself shot through with dread. She did as she was bade. She sat on
the steps. She cradled the sugar bag in her lap for comfort, and watched her father
85 run away from her. Down the steps he went, two at a time, pushing past
brilliantined clerks and bent-backed lags. He sprinted—a broad man with short
legs—across Church Street. He raised his arm and hurled the glass at the
sandstone wall of the magistrate's court. A policeman rose from his chair on the
veranda of the court. He watched as her papa picked up the glass humbug. The
90 policeman called out something over his shoulder and another policeman—a thin
man with a grey beard almost as wide as his chest—came out to join him.
Together they both stared at her papa who, without knowing himself observed,
now walked back across the rutted street, fouling his boots on steaming ox dung,
wiping them clean on a surviving patch of tussock grass. The thin policeman went
95 back into the court. The other policeman resumed his seat. Her papa trudged up
the steps and—no longer smelling quite so sweet—sat beside her. He put his hand
into his jacket pocket, and produced his clasp knife. His hands were trembling. He
had difficulty setting the knife the way he wanted it—with the largest blade pulled
out just a fraction. He looked at Lucinda and gave a gruesome sort of grin. Then
100 he put the tail of the Prince Rupert's drop between the blade and handle and forced
the blade hard home.

The drop shattered, of course. It sprayed like brown sugar across the post-
office steps, sprinkled a young widow's bonnet, dusted the black whiskers of a
flash-looking man in nankeen breeches. There were others affected. There was
105 much brushing and head turning, and perhaps there would have been trouble, for
Parramatta could still be a violent place, but when these who had been so rudely
assaulted located their assailant, they found him weeping; and not only him, but the
solemn little girl beside him. They could not know—how could they?—that while
the father and daughter had tears in common, this single effect was produced by
110 two quite different causes.

For Abel Leplastrier had been given, in John Bell's letter, an annotated index
to the event he had just witnessed. The glass was by way of being a symbol of
weakness and strength; it was a cipher for someone else's heart. It was a
confession, an accusation, a cry of pain. It was for this he wept.

115 Lucinda was moved by something much more simple—grief that such a lovely
thing could vanish like a pricked balloon. But her feelings were not unlayered and
there was, mixed with that hard slap of disappointment, a deeper, more nourishing

Continued

emotion: wonder.

It was very more-ish.

120 It was her mother who provided the second Prince Rupert's drop. This did not arrive unexpectedly, but was sought out by advertisement. They "let it off" on the steps of their hut. It was early, with the sun just slanting through the criss-crossed needles of the casuarinas which lined the creek. There was dew on the grass and their boots were wet from it. The *larmes bataviques* caught the light
125 and gathered it in like molten metal straight from a glassworks' glory-hole. It withstood her father's hammer and her mother's axe. And then Lucinda—it was her birthday, after all—took the needle-nosed pliers and snapped—it took a grunt to manage it—the tail.

130 Fireworks made of glass. An explosion of dew. Crescendo.³ Diminuendo.⁴ Silence.

While I am not suggesting that our founder purchased the glassworks to get more drops, it is clear that she had the seed planted, not once, but twice, and knew already the lovely contradictory nature of glass and she did not have to be told, on the day she saw the glassworks at Darling Harbour, that glass is a thing in
135 disguise, an actor, is not solid at all, but a liquid, that an old sheet of glass will not only take on a royal and purplish tinge but will reveal its true liquid nature by having grown fatter at the bottom and thinner at the top, and that even while it is as frail as the ice on a Parramatta puddle, it is stronger under compression than Sydney sandstone, that it is invisible, solid, in short, a joyous and paradoxical
140 thing, as good a material as any to build a life from.

Peter Carey
Contemporary Australian novelist

³Crescendo—musical term denoting a gradually swelling tone

⁴Diminuendo—musical term denoting a gradually diminishing tone

VII. Questions 62 to 70 in your Questions Booklet are based on this excerpt from the essay “The Ring of Time.”

from THE RING OF TIME

Behind me I heard someone say, “Excuse me, please,” in a low voice. She was halfway into the building when I turned and saw her—a girl of sixteen or seventeen, politely threading her way through us onlookers who blocked the entrance. As she emerged in front of us, I saw that she was barefoot, her dirty
5 little feet fighting the uneven ground. In most respects she was like any of two or three dozen showgirls you encounter if you wander about the winter quarters of Mr. John Ringling North’s circus, in Sarasota—cleverly proportioned, deeply browned by the sun, dusty, eager, and almost naked. But her grave face and the naturalness of her manner gave her a sort of quick distinction and brought a new
10 note into the gloomy octagonal building where we had all cast our lot for a few moments. As soon as she had squeezed through the crowd, she spoke a word or two to the older woman, whom I took to be her mother, stepped to the ring, and waited while the horse coasted to a stop in front of her. She gave the animal a couple of affectionate swipes on his enormous neck and then swung herself
15 aboard. The horse immediately resumed his rocking canter, the woman goading him on, chanting something that sounded like “Hop! Hop!”

In attempting to recapture this mild spectacle, I am merely acting as recording secretary for one of the oldest of societies—the society of those who, at one time or another, have surrendered, without even a show of resistance, to the
20 bedazzlement of a circus rider. As a writing man, or secretary, I have always felt charged with the safekeeping of all unexpected items of worldly or unworldly enchantment, as though I might be held personally responsible if even a small one were to be lost. But it is not easy to communicate anything of this nature. The circus comes as close to being the world in microcosm as anything I know; in a
25 way, it puts all the rest of show business in the shade. Its magic is universal and complex. Out of its wild disorder comes order; from its rank smell rises the good aroma of courage and daring; out of its preliminary shabbiness comes the final splendor. And buried in the familiar boasts of its advance agents lies the modesty of most of its people. For me the circus is at its best before it has been put
30 together. It is at its best at certain moments when it comes to a point, as through a burning glass, in the activity and destiny of a single performer out of so many. One ring is always bigger than three. One rider, one aerialist, is always greater than six. In short, a man has to catch the circus unawares to experience its full impact and share its gaudy dream.

35 The ten-minute ride the girl took achieved—as far as I was concerned, who wasn’t looking for it, and quite unbeknownst to her, who wasn’t even striving for it—the thing that is sought by performers everywhere, on whatever stage, whether struggling in the tidal currents of Shakespeare or bucking the difficult motion of a

Continued

horse. I somehow got the idea she was just cadging a ride,¹ improving a shining
40 ten minutes in the diligent way all serious artists seize free moments to hone the
blade of their talent and keep themselves in trim. Her brief tour included only
elementary postures and tricks, perhaps because they were all she was capable of,
perhaps because her warmup at this hour was unscheduled and the ring was not
45 rigged for a real practice session. She swung herself off and on the horse several
times, gripping his mane. She did a few knee-stands—or whatever they are
called—dropping to her knees and quickly bouncing back up on her feet again.
Most of the time she simply rode in a standing position, well aft on the beast, her
hands hanging easily at her sides, her head erect, her straw-colored ponytail
50 lightly brushing her shoulders, the blood of exertion showing faintly through the
tan of her skin. Twice she managed a one-foot stance—a sort of ballet pose, with
arms outstretched. At one point the neck strap of her bathing suit broke and she
went twice around the ring in the classic attitude of a woman making minor
repairs to a garment. The fact that she was standing on the back of a moving
55 horse while doing this invested the matter with a clownish significance that
perfectly fitted the spirit of the circus—jocund, yet charming. She just rolled the
strap into a neat ball and stowed it inside her bodice while the horse rocked and
rolled beneath her in dutiful innocence. The bathing suit proved as self-reliant as
its owner and stood up well enough without benefit of strap.

The richness of the scene was in its plainness, its natural condition—of horse,
60 of ring, of girl, even to the girl's bare feet that gripped the bare back of her proud
and ridiculous mount. The enchantment grew not out of anything that happened
or was performed but out of something that seemed to go round and around and
around with the girl, attending her, a steady gleam in the shape of a circle—a ring
of ambition, of happiness, of youth. (And the positive pleasures of equilibrium
65 under difficulties.) In a week or two, all would be changed, all (or almost all) lost:
the girl would wear makeup, the horse would wear gold, the ring would be
painted, the bark would be clean for the feet of the horse, the girl's feet would be
clean for the slippers that she'd wear. All, all would be lost.

As I watched with the others, our jaws adroop, our eyes alight, I became
70 painfully conscious of the element of time. Everything in the hideous old building
seemed to take the shape of a circle, conforming to the course of the horse. The
rider's gaze, as she peered straight ahead, seemed to be circular, as though bent by
force of circumstance; then time itself began running in circles, and so the
beginning was where the end was, and the two were the same, and one thing ran
75 into the next and time went round and around and got nowhere. The girl wasn't
so young that she did not know the delicious satisfaction of having a perfectly
behaved body and the fun of using it to do a trick most people can't do, but she
was too young to know that time does not really move in a circle at all. I thought:
"She will never be as beautiful as this again"—a thought that made me acutely
80 unhappy—and in a flash my mind (which is too much of a busybody to suit me)

Continued

¹cadging a ride—taking advantage of an opportunity

had projected her twenty-five years ahead, and she was now in the centre of the ring, on foot, wearing a conical hat and high-heeled shoes, the image of the older woman, holding the long rein, caught in the treadmill of an afternoon long in the future. “She is at that enviable moment in life [I thought] when she believes she can go once around the ring, make one complete circuit, and at the end be exactly the same age as at the start.” Everything in her movements, her expression, told you that for her the ring of time was perfectly formed, changeless, predictable, without beginning or end, like the ring in which she was traveling at this moment with the horse that wallowed under her. And then I slipped back into my trance, and time was circular again—time, pausing quietly with the rest of us, so as not to disturb the balance of a performer.

Her ride ended as casually as it had begun. The older woman stopped the horse, and the girl slid to the ground. As she walked toward us to leave, there was a quick, small burst of applause. She smiled broadly, in surprise and pleasure; then her face suddenly regained its gravity and she disappeared through the door.

E.B. White
Contemporary American journalist

Credits

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English 30: Part B
June 1993

